GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1428
ANSWERED ON:10.03.2008
LOSS OF AGRICULTURAL LAND FOR REAL ESTATE
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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether agricultural land in many parts of the country is being acquired for real estate business and for industrial purposes thereby causing loss to the Agriculture Sector; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and action taken thereon?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE(SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA)

(a) & (b): As per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, land is a state subject; therefore, each State acquires land for various purposes which is governed by their respective policies and priorities including acquisition of land for SEZs or for real estate development by Government agencies.

As per available estimates, total cultivable land was 185.09 million ha. in 1980-81 which has reduced to 182.57 million ha. in 2005-06 in the country. During the same period, land under non agricultural uses has increased from 19.66 million ha. to 24.94 million ha., resulting in marginal decline in the extent of cultivable land. This reduction in cultivable land is mainly due to diversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes such as urbanization, roads, industries etc. Since inception of the SEZ Act, 2005 and the SEZ Rules, 2006, formal approval has been granted for setting up of 405 SEZs, which involves about 52,922 ha. of land, out of which 21,626 ha. of land was already in possession with State Industrial Development Corporations/ different State Governments.

With a view to minimize the loss to the Agricultural Sector, the State Governments have been advised that in case of land acquisition for SEZ, priority be given to waste and barren land and if necessary, single crop agricultural land could be acquired for the SEZs. If perforce a portion of double cropped agricultural land has to be acquired to meet the minimum area requirements, especially for multi-product SEZs, the same should not exceed 10% of the total land required for the SEZ.

In pursuance of the decisions taken by Empowered Group of Ministers (EGOM), the State Governments have also been informed on 15th June, 2007 that the Board of Approval will not approve any SEZs where the State Governments have carried out or propose to carry out compulsory acquisition of land for such SEZs after 5th April, 2007.